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# Kaskaskia River

STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA



# CONSERVATION

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## THE AREA

The Kaskaskia River State Fish & Wildlife Area (KRFWA) is one of the largest state-owned and managed sites in Illinois. Located 35 miles southeast of St. Louis, Missouri, the area comprises approximately 20,000 acres and extends along the Kaskaskia River from Fayetteville to the Mississippi River in St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph Counties. The Illinois Department of Transportation owns the land along the river and leases most of the land to the Conservation Department to manage for fish, wildlife, and other recreational activities. There are a few areas which are managed by the Kaskaskia River Port District for industrial use and are unavailable for public use.

“Baldwin Lake”, a 2,018-acre reservoir built by Illinois Power Company is contained within KRFWA. This lake serves as a source of cooling water for use in operating a nearby electric generating station. Baldwin Lake is open to the public for fishing and is a major part of the area’s waterfowl refuge. A separate map and brochure are available upon request.

## HISTORY

Southwestern Illinois, which includes KRFWA, has traditionally been known to be rich in fish and wildlife resources. This is evident by its occupation by both Indians and early settlers to the state. The Kaskaskia River remained essentially unchanged until the late 1960’s when it was modified by channelization to promote commercial development and navigation. This led to eventual state ownership of the site and increased the public use of the area.

## NATURAL FEATURES

The KRFWA possesses a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Water acres include not only the Kaskaskia River with its associated side channel and backwater areas (2,200 acres), but also Baldwin Lake (2,018 acres).

A land area of about 16,000 acres includes an extensive mixed bottomland forest comprised of pecan, soft maple, burr oak, pin oak, shellbark hickory, and willow. Many cultivated and fallow fields, native grass patches, brushy areas, and other “open” areas are interspersed with the stands of mature bottomland timber. Due to this great diversity of habitats, there exists good wildlife populations on the site.

## ACTIVITIES

**Fishing:** Fishing is the most popular activity on the Kaskaskia River. The area contains 36 miles of channelized river, plus additional oxbows, creeks, and river bottom lakes for the fisherman to enjoy.

Fishing for channel catfish and flathead catfish is especially popular at this site and offer both day and night fishing opportunities. Other species include largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill, carp, and freshwater drum. All exist in good numbers and provide excellent fishing throughout the year. All fishing tournaments must be scheduled through the site office.

**Boating:** Concrete launch ramps are provided on the Kaskaskia River at Fayetteville, New Athens, on Highway

154 west of Baldwin, and at Evansville. "No Wake" zones exist near the ramps and industrial sites. Also, all of the oxbows have been designated as "No Wake" zones and boaters must operate their watercraft accordingly in these areas.

Weekends and holidays throughout the summer receive the most boat useage and boaters are urged to be extra safety conscious during this time. Boaters should also be aware of barge traffic on the river as well as a lock and dam site at the mouth of the river.

**Hunting:** Due to the amount of wooded acreage at KRFWA, forest game species such as squirrels and white-tailed deer are very common and offer sportsmen many hours of hunting enjoyment. The extensive wetland



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areas associated with the river provide ample opportunities for waterfowl hunting. In addition, a public waterfowl hunting area, "Doza Creek Waterfowl Management Area" exists on the area. Upland game such as rabbits and quail can be found in the open areas adjacent to the wooded portions of the site. Dove hunting is provided in several sunflower fields on the area.

Approximately 14,000 acres area available for hunting. Hunter check stations are maintained on the area and access is primarily from the boat ramps and parking lots. A separate "Hunter Fact Sheet" is available upon request for additional information.

**Camping/Picnicking:** Primitive camping and picnicking are permitted on lands adjacent to the river. Please check with the Site Superintendent for locations and access information. **All trash must be removed upon leaving.**

**Other activities:** A 12-mile trail system exists on the site and is used by hunters, hikers, birdwatchers, and other outdoor enthusiasts. These trails are closed to vehicular traffic. Please contact the site superintendent for the brochure showing these trails.

**Please:** This area is for all to enjoy, so help keep it clean. Put all litter in the nearest available trash container.

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION . . .

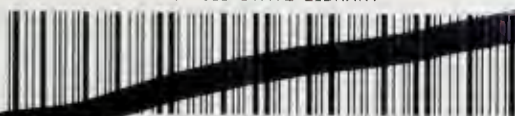
Groups of 25 or more persons will not be admitted to any state site unless permission from the site superintendent has been obtained to use the facilities. In addition, groups of minors must have adequate supervision and at least one responsible adult must accompany each group of 15 minors. All pets must be on a leash.

Numerous state sites are within easy access of every part of Illinois. Lodges, cabins, and dining rooms are important features of Illinois Beach, Starved Rock, Pere Marquette, and Giant City; White Pines Forest has cabins and dining rooms only, and Black Hawk has dining rooms only. Reservations for lodging should be made with lodge managers.

Most state sites are open year round, except on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. When weather conditions necessitate the closing of roads during freezing and thawing periods, access to facilities is by foot only.

For more details about KRFWA contact Site Superintendent, Kaskaskia River State Fish and Wildlife Area, Baldwin, IL 62217; phone (618) 785-2555. For more information on other Illinois recreation areas, write: Department of Conservation, 524 South Second Street, Springfield, IL 62706.

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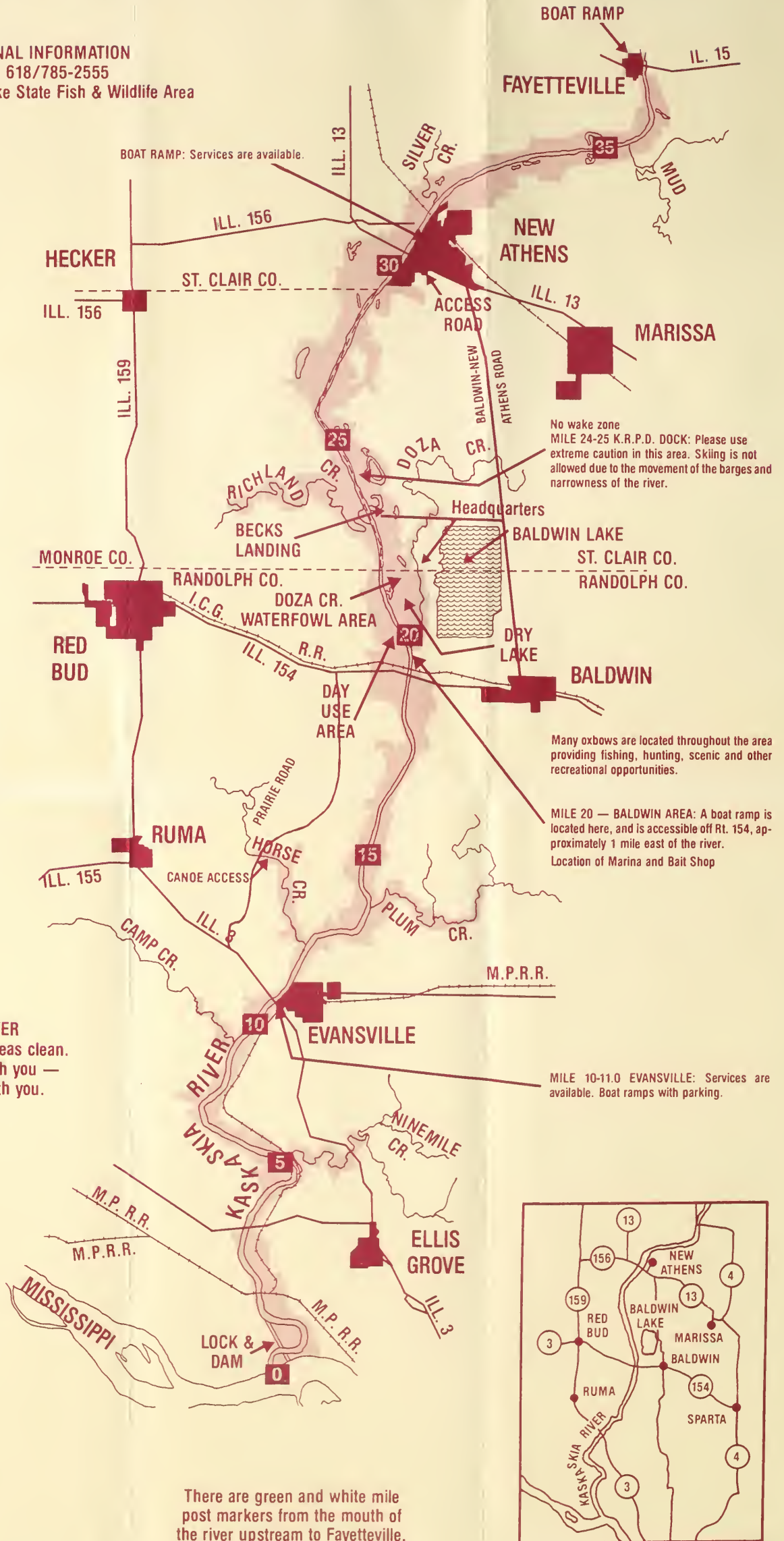


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**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Please call: 618/785-2555

Kaskaskia/Baldwin Lake State Fish & Wildlife Area



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